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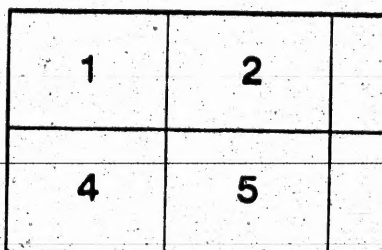
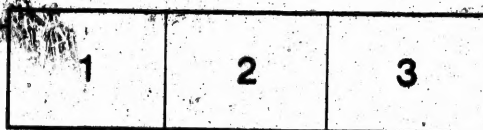
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A

LETTER TO A METHODIST.

BY A PRESBYTER

OF THE DIOCESE OF MARYLAND, UNITED STATES.

PART III.

THE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION OF THE
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

RE-PUBLISHED
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LETTER TO A METHODIST.

PART III.

III. I shall now proceed to "set down on paper," as you request, some of the arguments you have heard me use touching the *Apostolic Succession* of the Christian ministry. By this expression, "the *Apostolic Succession*," I mean the doctrine of a regular, continued and unbroken transmission of ministerial authority in the succession of *Bishops* from the Apostles to the present day. In other words, (as I wish to be distinctly understood), I mean to say, that no ministry is *valid*, unless it can be traced, through the line of Bishops, to the Apostles, and through the Apostles to Christ. And further than this, I mean to say, that every ministry which cannot do this is a *spurious* ministry; that their ministerial acts are *good for nothing*; in other words, that they are *laymen*—and that every member of their congregations has as much authority to preach, baptize, &c., as have such ministers. That this is precisely the condition of the "Methodist" ministry has not only been fully proved, but is obvious from their own showing, since they only trace back *their* succession to Wesley, who was only a Presbyter of the Church.

To this doctrine of an *Apostolic Succession* in the Christian ministry various objections have been started, which I shall first consider and refute:

1. It is objected, that the chain which binds the present Bishops of the Church to the Apostles may have been broken.

Reply. Those who urge this objection have been repeatedly called upon to prove *when* and *where* the chain was broken, but they never have been able to point out *when* the break took place, nor *where*. We deny the fact of their being any such break, and shall hereafter show that it could *not* have occurred.

2. It is objected, that some of the members of the Church do not believe the doctrine.

Reply. The Church is not responsible for the individual opinions of her members on this, or that, point. The Church has her own standards of doctrine, viz., her Prayer Book and Homilies. It is to *them* we are to look for the doctrines she holds. It would, indeed, be little short of a miracle, if in a Church numbering *eighteen thousand* clergymen, and *eight or ten millions* of laymen, there should be none who saw one or more doctrines in a different light from what the Church views them.

3. It is objected, that some of the Bishops in this Apostolic line, were men of abandoned character, and, therefore, their ministerial acts were invalid.

Reply. Put the case at the worst—that the Bishops in question were *devils*. Yet was not Judas, declared by Christ, long before he betrayed him, to be “*a devil?*” Yet Christ, who knew this from “the beginning,” (John vi. 64,) not only “called” him to be an Apostle, but sent him forth to preach; neither was his “*bishoprick*” *taken* from him, but he continued in it until his death, (Acts i.) Yet, for all this, Judas was just as much an Apostle as St. John or St. Peter. If, then, Judas were an Apostle; men of like character with him may be *successors* of the Apostles. Surely, it would be a dreadful doctrine, that our salvation depended on the *religious* character of our ministers!

4. It is objected, that one of the Popes of Rome was a *woman*, and therefore her ordinations were invalid.

Reply. This story about a *she-Pope* is a fabrication, as has been fully proved by Gieseler, the Lutheran historian, (see his Text Book of Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii. p. 20;) and if it were not, it is sheer ignorance to suppose the succession of orders could be affected by the invalidity of any one link in the succession of any particular bishoprick. Those who use such an argument must suppose that every Pope ordained his own successor! If not, how could the possession of the Papal chair by a woman affect the ordination of the Pope next in succession? Nor is it true, moreover, that the "apostolic succession" depends at all upon the succession of the Popes. If they had all been women, since the year 700, England would still have had its own succession unaffected.

5. It is objected, that this doctrine unchurches all other Churches.

Reply 1. If this doctrine be true, we are not answerable for the consequences: the consequences rest with God.

Reply 2. The members of these "Churches," or their ancestors, were once, through the mercy of God, made members of THE CHURCH, and they left Her; the doors of THE CHURCH are still open to receive them; if they will not enter in they unchurch themselves.

6. It is objected, that it cannot be proved that the Bishops of the Church have always had a *three-fold* ordination; that is, that they were always ordained Deacons and Presbyters *before* they were ordained Bishops.

Reply. This was not, and is not, necessary. The Apostles were ordained to the *highest* office, that of Apostles. Yet they call themselves *Presbyters*, or *Elders*, (1 Pet. v. 1.; 2 John i.; 3 John i.) and "ministers" or *Deacons*, (1 Cor. iii. 5.; 2 Cor. iii. 6.) The higher office includes the lower. A layman

ordained a Bishop now, would possess the power of both a Presbyter and a Deacon, as the Apostles did.

7. It is objected, that the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession was never heard of before the Reformation, about three hundred years ago.

Reply. That the Apostles appointed successors to themselves, who again were to appoint others to succeed *them*, is proved by the unanimous voice of all antiquity. Thus, Clement, Bishop of Rome, the disciple and associate of St. Paul, (a man, whose name, St. Paul says, is in the *Book of Life*, Phik iv. 3.) wrote an Epistle to the Church at Corinth, about the year 87, in which he says, that the Apostles "appointed persons [to the ministerial office] and then gave *direction* in what manner, when these should die, other approved men *should succeed* in the ministry." (Ep. Cor. c. 44.)

Again, Irenæus, who was born about the time St. John died, and wrote about 85 years after Clement, says:

"We are able to enumerate those who were appointed by the Apostles to be Bishops in the Churches, and their successors in a continued course to us."— (Adv. Hær. iii. 3.)

Again, Irenæus says, "We can reckon up those, whom the Apostles ordained to be Bishops in the several Churches, and who they were that *succeeded them, down to our times*. For the Apostles desired to have those in all things perfect and unreprouvable, whom they left to be their *successors*, and to whom *they committed their own Apostolic authority*. We have the *successions of Bishops*, to whom the Apostolic Church, in every place, was committed. All these, [namely, the heretics,] are much later than the Bishops, to whom the Apostles did deliver the Churches."— (Adv. Hær. iii. 4.)

About twenty-five years after this (A.D. 200) wrote Tertullian. He thus addresses the heretics: "If any dare mingle themselves with the Apostolic age, that thus they ~~may~~ appear to be handed from the Apostles, because they were under the Apostles, we may say, Let them show the *beginnings* of their Churches; let them declare the *series of their Bishops, so running down from the beginning by successions*, that the first Bishop may have been one of the Apostles, or Apostolic men who yet continued with the Apostles, for their author and predecessor. For, in this manner, the *Apostolical Churches* trace their origin." (Pres. Adv. Har. c. 32.)

About 110 years after this, (A.D. 310,) wrote Eusebius, the Ecclesiastical Historian, who gives the following list of Bishops in the *Apostolical Succession* from the Apostles to his own time, in the four chief Churches then in existence: those of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem:—

ROME.	ALEXANDRIA.	JERUSALEM.	ANTIOCH.
Linus,	Anianus,	James,	Evodius,
Cletus,	Avilus,	Simon,	Ignatius,
Clement,	Cerdon,	Justus,	Heros,
Evaristus,	Primus,	Zachens,	Cornelius,
Alexander,	Justus,	Tobias,	Eros,
Sixtus,	Eumenes,	Benjamin,	Theophilus,
Telesphorus,	Marcus,	John,	Maximus,
Hyginus,	Celadin,	Matthew,	Serapion,
Pius,	Agrippinus,	Philip,	Aselepiades,
Anicetus,	Julius,	Seneca,	Philetus,
Soter,	Demetrius,	Justus,	Zebinus,
Eleutherus,	Heraclas,	Levi,	Babylus,
Victor,	Dionysius,	Ephrem,	Fabius,
Zephyrynus,	Maximus,	Joseph,	Demetrianus,
Calixtus,	Theonus,	Judas,	Paul,
Urban,	Peter.	Marcus,	Domnus,
Pontianus,	A.D. 302.	Cassianus,	Timæus,
Anteros,		Publius,	Cyrillus,
Fabian,		Maximus,	Tyrannus.
Cornelius,		Julian,	A.D. 302.
Lucius,		Caius,	

ROME.	ALEXANDRIA.	JERUSALEM.	ANTIOCH.
Stephen,			Symmachus,
Sixtus,			• Caius,
Dionysius,			Julian,
Felix,			Maximus,
Eutychianus,			Antonius,
Caius,			Capito,
Marcellinus.			Valens,
A.D. 296.			Dolchianus,

Narcissus,
Dius,
Germanio,
Gordius,
[Narcissus,]
Alexander,
Mazabanas,
Hymeneus,
Zambdas,
Hermion.
A.D. 300.

These lists of the Bishops, in Apostolic Succession, were compiled from public records, then in existence, by Eusebius, and this fact is a proof with what care the Succession was guarded, and the record of it preserved. Several other early writers, in different parts of the world, give these same lists in their works, so as to place the facts beyond a shadow of doubt.— Hereafter it will be shown, that in every age, from the Apostles to the Reformation, this, and this alone, was the doctrine of the Church. And yet there are writers of the present day so grossly ignorant as to tell us, that the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession was never heard of until the Reformation!

Having considered and refuted the only objections to this doctrine which were worth considering, I shall now proceed to establish it. In doing this, I shall incidentally consider various other points connected with the Christian ministry.

The first point to which I shall direct your attention is the *fact*, that the Christian ministry was

appointed by God himself, (1 Cor. xii. 28,) acting, either by His Son, Jesus Christ, or else by His inspired Apostles. This ministry was *threefold*:

1st. *Apostles*. (St. Luke vi. 13.)

2d. *Elders, Presbyters, or Bishops*. (Acts xiv. 23; Phil. i. 1.)

3d. *Deacons*. (Acts vi.; Phil. i. 1.)

To this *threefold* ministry were appointed *particular duties*.

The duty of the *DEACONS* was (1.) to receive and distribute the alms of the Church. (Acts vi. 1, 2, 3.) (2.) They were allowed to preach. (Acts viii. 5, 12, 40.) (3.) They were to baptize. (Acts viii. 12, 36, 38.) (4.) They were to *assist* in the administration of the Lord's Supper. This is nowhere expressly asserted in the New Testament, but it has ever been the uniform custom of the Church from the beginning. It is mentioned by Justin Martyr, A.D. 150, as pertaining to their office. (Apol. c. 85.)—(5.) They were to assist in ruling the Church. (1 Tim. iii. 5.) (6.) There were some other duties, which the Church has always imposed upon the Deacons, such as catechizing children—looking after the poor, &c., which my limits will only permit me to refer to.

The duties of *PRESBYTERS* (Elders, or Bishops—the three *names*, in the New Testament, being used indiscriminately, to designate the second office in the Christian ministry)—were (1.) To teach and instruct others—in other words, to preach. (1 Tim. iii. 2.) (2.) “To feed the Church of God.” (Acts xx. 17, 28.) The *spiritual food* with which the Church was to be fed, was the Word of God; preaching the Gospel; the Body and Blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper; and the communication of the Holy Spirit in Baptism. (John vii. 37, 38, 39; Acts ii. 38.)—(3.) They were to *rule* in the Church. (1 Tim. v.

17, iii. 4, 5; 1 Pet. v. 3.) (4.) They were to be particularly careful to be on their guard against any of their own members, who (like *Wesley, Coke, &c.*,) would arise to "draw away disciples after them."—(Acts xx. 30, 31.)* (5.) They were to unite with the *first* order of the ministry—the Apostles—at the framing of new rules (or canons) for the government of the Church. (Acts xv. 2, xvi. 4.)

Such were the *duties* pertaining to the office of those called in the New Testament by the names of *Presbyter*, *Elder*, or *Bishop*; the three names *there* denoting the same officer, as I have before observed, namely, the *second* in the Christian ministry. Hereafter I shall designate this officer, for brevity's sake, by the name of *Presbyter*, the name usually applied to him by the Church.

Some of these duties Presbyters exercised in common with *Deacons*; others, you will perceive, belonged peculiarly to their own office, as being a higher order than that of *Deacons* in the Christian ministry. You will also perceive that the power of *ORDINATION* is not one of the duties of Presbyters; in other words, the power of *ORDINATION* did not belong to the *second order* in the ministry; and as *Wesley* belonged to this second order, the power of ordaining did not belong

* St. Paul tells these *Elders* of the Church at *Ephesus*, that, for three years, he had warned them, night and day, with *tears*, against those who would arise from among *themselves*, to draw away disciples after them. Surely, then, it cannot be a *small sin*, which thus made the Apostle shed tears at the mere thought that it *would* be committed! Yet this is precisely what *Wesley* and *Coke* did! The only difference is, that the former were *elders* of the Church of *Ephesus*, the latter *elders* of the Church of *England*; but St. Paul's language is equally applicable to both. And surely, it cannot be a *small sin* to the followers of those *elders*, who have thus sinfully risen up to draw away disciples after them! And yet this is precisely what the Methodists did and are doing, in becoming the followers of *Wesley, Coke, &c.* (Acts xx. 30, 31.)

to him. No one pretends that Deacons, the lowest order, ever had authority to ordain.

We are now to consider the duties pertaining to the highest officer of the Christian ministry—that of an APOSTLE. What were the powers and authority of the Apostles is best shown from the COMMISSION which Christ gave to them. It is as follows:

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” And “unto you, I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven; and whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto him, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained; AS THE FATHER HATH SENT ME, EVEN SO SEND I YOU; and lo, I am with you always,* even unto the end of the world.” (Matt. xvi. 19, xviii. 18, xxviii. 19, 20; John xx. 21, 23.)

Such is the broad Commission, which Christ gave to His Apostles. What is the *meaning* of this Commission? Could the Apostles, to whom it was given, misunderstand it? This was impossible, for three reasons: (1.) Because, Christ, for forty days (in the interval between His resurrection and ascension into heaven) had instructed them in “the things pertaining to the kingdom of God”—that is His Church. (Acts i. 3.) (2.) Because Christ sent unto them His Holy Spirit, “to lead them into *all truth*, and to bring to their remembrance every thing which He had said unto them; and to teach them *all things*.” (John xvi. 13., xiv. 26.) (3.) Because they were *inspired* men, acting under the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, and, there-

* The Greek words, here translated “always,” signify *all days, or every day*.

fore, could not fall into error. How, then, did the Apostles understand their Commission? Their various official acts, under that Commission, will best explain how *they* understood it; and will teach us, also, how *we* are to understand it.

1. The Apostles *preached*.
2. They *baptized*. (Acts ii.)
3. They possessed the *power of the keys*; they *admitted*, (Acts ii.) or *rejected*, (1 Tim. i. 20.) persons from the Church.
4. They administered the *Lord's Supper*. (1 Cor. xi.)
5. They *ordained* persons to be ministers of the Church. (Acts i. vi. xiv. 23.)
6. They administered *confirmation*, (Acts viii. 15, 17., xix. 6., xiv. 22, 23.)
7. They had the *rule* over the two inferior orders of ministers—the Presbyters and Deacons. No proof is needful on this point, since none deny that the Apostles had the *entire* control of the Church in their own hands during *their life*; and although the power of *ruling* in the Church was committed, to a certain degree, necessarily to both Presbyters and Deacons, still it was in subordination to the Apostles. The various Epistles of St. Paul are *full* on this point—that the Apostles retained in their own hands, the entire control over the Church, both clergy and laity.
8. They exercised the right of presiding in all *councils* of the Church. In the first council, James, an Apostle, as the *presiding* officer, “gave sentence.” (Acts xv. 19.)
9. They exercised the right of governing one Church in particular, having within it, and under them, a number of Presbyters and Deacons. All ecclesiastical antiquity bears witness to the *fact*, that the Church, at Jerusalem, was under the government of St James, the Apostle. Hegesippus, who wrote about the year 150, says, that “James received the

government of the Church at Jerusalem, from the Apostles." (Com. l. v. in Ens. Ecc. His. ii. 23.) That there were both Presbyters and Deacons in the Church at Jerusalem, see Acts vi. and xv.

10. They called themselves APOSTLES, as acting under a high and peculiar commission.

Such then were the official Acts of the Apostles under their high Commission from the lips of Christ himself; and as it was *impossible* that they could err respecting the *meaning* of it, such must have been the authority committed to them by the great Head of the Church. You will perceive, at a glance, that the Apostles were altogether different officers from either Presbyters or Deacons; and that these two *inferior* orders of the Christian ministry, were at a great remove from the *first* order. The peculiar powers of the Apostles, which distinguished them from the two inferior orders in the Church, were these, 1. The power of the keys; 2. The power of ORDINATION; 3. The power of *Confirmation*; 4. The rule over the inferior ministers of the Church; 5. The right of presiding in councils of the Church; 6. The individual right of governing *one* Church in particular, having within it and under them, Presbyters and Deacons; 7. The name of *Apostle*, as indicating their peculiar office.

The next question, then, which arises is this: did the Apostles transfer their *peculiar* power and authority to another body of men, who were to *succeed* them? I unhesitatingly answer, *They did*; and shall now proceed to prove that they did, in the order in which I have just stated these "peculiar" powers.

1. The Apostles communicated to another body of men, the *power of the keys*; that is, of admitting or excluding members from the Church of God.* As

* A portion of this power was likewise committed to the Presbyters and Deacons, but not the *full* power.

members of the Church were admitted by *baptism*, nothing need be said on that point. That the power, of *excluding* them afterwards from the Church, was given, is obvious from St. Paul's language to Titus: "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." (Titus iii. 10.) He gives Timothy authority to sit in judgment upon *Elders*; and, if to sit in judgment and to receive "accusations," then to pass sentence, (1 Tim. v. 19.) One of the complaints against the Angel (or Apostle) of the Church at Pergamos was, that he had neglected to exercise discipline upon certain persons therein. Of course, authority to exercise discipline had been committed unto him. (Rev. ii. 14.)

2. The Apostles communicated to another body of men, the power of *ORDINATION*. It is expressly said, (Acts xiv. 23.) that *Barnabas*, as well as Paul, *ordained Elders* in every city. St. Paul charges Timothy, "to lay hands suddenly on no man." (1 Tim. v. 22.) He writes to Titus: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and *ordain elders* in every city." The third chapter of the first Epistle to Timothy is filled with a description of the qualifications which he should require in those who were to be admitted to the ministerial office.

3. The Apostles communicated to another body of men, the power of *Confirmation*. Paul and *Barnabas* are expressly mentioned in the Acts as travelling about, and *confirming* the Churches. (Acts xiv. 22, 23.) Barnabas exercised this power equally with St. Paul.

4. The Apostles communicated to another body of men, the *rule* over the inferior clergy. St. Paul writes to Timothy: "That thou mightest charge some, that they teach no other [That is, no false] doctrine"—"against an *elder* receive not an accusation, but before

two or three witnesses"—"them [that is, the *elders* thus on trial] that sin, rebuke before all, that others may fear"—I charge *thee*, that *thou* observe these things, [these rules, for the discipline of the clergy,] without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." (1 Tim. i. iii. v. 19, 20, 21.) The same oversight is extended over the *Deacons*. Timothy is told, "that they must first be *proved*; then let them use the office of a Deacon, being found blameless." (1 Tim. iii. 22.) So, when *Titus* was to "ordain elders in every city," he was made the judge of their qualifications. (Titus i. 5.) Thus, also, the Angel (or Apostle†) of the Church at Ephesus, in the year 96, is commended by our Lord for *disciplining* those who claimed to be "Apostles"—that is, who usurped the powers of the *first order* of the Christian ministry, as Coke and Asbury did—when they were not. (Rev. ii. 2.)

5. The Apostles communicated to another body of men, the power to *preside* in the councils of the Church. As there is but *one* instance recorded in Scripture of a council being held, (Acts xv.) we have, of course, no evidence from Scripture on this point, as, at *that* council St. James presided. But all history testifies to the *fact*, that, from the foundation of the Church to the present day, there never was an instance of one of the *second* order in the Church, who presided in the councils of the Church. The *chair* was always filled by one of the *first* order of the ministry. Nor was this a local custom merely. In Europe, Asia, and Africa, it was one, universal, rule.

6. The Apostles communicated to another body of men, the power of individually governing one particular Church, having under them Presbyters and Deacons: in other words, the Apostles committed the

† The word *Angel*, and *Apostle*, have the same signification—*one that is sent*.

government of each Church to *one* man, having under him Presbyters and Deacons.

The Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy is full and complete on this point. Complete authority was given to *him*, and to no one else, over the Church in Ephesus; and though he might have made journeys occasionally to other places, there is not a particle of evidence to show that he ever resided permanently any where except in Ephesus. He had full authority given to him, to *watch over, bring to trial, and judge*, the inferior orders of the ministry; and his jurisdiction extended to all classes of the *laity*, so as to *command* and *rebuke* them. (1 Tim. i. 3., ii. 11., iv. 17., v. 20.; 2 Tim. iv. 2.)

The Epistle of St. Paul to Titus affords another instance of this establishment of *one* man, with Apostolic authority over a Church in one place, and that very often a very large district of country. The island of Crete had within it *one hundred* cities; yet St. Paul writes to Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in *every city*, as I had appointed thee." (Titus i. 5.) He had authority not only to *ordain*, but to "stop the mouths"—that is, prevent the *preaching*—of those, who taught false doctrine. (Titus i. 11.) He had authority to "reject heretics"—that is, to cast them out of the Church. (Titus iii. 10.) And the supervision of all classes of the laity is committed to him, as the whole Epistle testifies.

By reference, likewise, to the *second* and *third* chapters of Revelations, you will find, that, in the year 96 (when that book was written,) there was in the Church at Ephesus, Pergamos, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Smyrna, and Thyatira, *one* man, in each Church, invested with Apostolic authority, called an *Angel*; to whom St. John was commanded to

write the short Epistles contained in those chapters, and who were held accountable to God for the state of the Churches they governed.

7. And with their *peculiar powers*, the Apostles communicated to the body of men who were to exercise them, their own peculiar name of "*Apostle*,"—See the case of *Matthias*, (Acts i. 22, 26., iv. 33.)—*Barabas* is called an Apostle. (Acts xiv. 14.) Paul, *Sylvanus*, and *Timothy*, addressed an Epistle to the Church of the Thessalonians, in which they expressly call themselves Apostles. (1 Thess. i. 1., ii. 6.)—*Andronicus* and *Junia* are called Apostles. (Rom. xvi. 7.) And other like cases could be mentioned. Thus Jerome says: "In process of time, *others were ordained Apostles*, by those whom our Lord hath chosen, as that passage in Philippians shows, 'I supposed it necessary to send unto you Epaphroditus, your Apostle.'"† (Com. Gal. i. 19.)

I have thus, sir, with as much particularity as the nature of a letter will admit, examined into the powers of the three orders of the Christian ministry; and you are now enabled to perceive, not only that the three orders are entirely *distinct*, but that the *highest* order, called Apostles, possessed an authority in the Church of God greatly superior to either of the lower orders; an authority, indeed, so distinct and so superior, that for any of the lower orders to lay claim to it would be the grossest usurpation. All the authority and power in the Church was given by Christ to His Apostles; a *portion* of this power and authority was committed by the Apostles to the Presbyters and Deacons; but the authority committed to *them* terminated with themselves—they had no power to continue it by communicating it to others. But although this was the case with Presbyters and Deacons, it was

† The English translation says "*your Messenger*," but the Greek is "*your Apostle*."

not so with *all* those whom the Apostles ordained.—The full power and authority which the Apostles derived from Christ, under His high Commission, I have shown, was transmitted, in every particular necessary for the perpetuation of the Christian ministry, and for the government of the Church, to *another body of men*, who occupied an equal rank with themselves as Apostles in the Church. And thus we have a full explanation of the *meaning* of the Commission (in regard to the *succession* in the Christian ministry,) which Christ gave to His Apostles, and as *they* understood it. He, therein, says, "As my Father has sent me, **EVEN** so send I you." God sent Christ with authority to send *others* to be His successors in the establishment and government of His Church; and the Apostles, clothed with the same authority, sent *other* to be *their successors* in the exercise of the Apostolic office. And as Christ, when he gave them this Commission, told them he would be with them in the exercise of it "always [every day] even until the end of the world," it is plain, to a demonstration, that the Commission to appoint their successors must last until "the end of the world;" and that, of course, there must have always been, and are now, a body of men clothed with Apostolic authority who hold, and act under, this Commission, derived from Christ, through the Apostles, of *sending* others, and of *governing* the Church, because the "end of the world" has not yet come.

Now, for this to be the case, those, who *succeeded* the Apostles, must have appointed a body of men clothed with the same commission of *sending others*, &c., as *they* had themselves derived from the Apostles; these, in *their* turn, must have appointed *others* with a like Commission; and so on, one generation after another, until the present time. Was such the fact? Did the successors of the Apostles appoint others

with a like Commission with themselves? If so, who were the persons thus appointed?

Hitherto, I have relied nearly altogether on the *Scriptures* for proof of the Apostolic Commission and Succession; but we have now arrived at a period to which the Scripture history does not extend. We have no more precedents of *that kind* upon the file.—We shall, therefore, have to rely on other testimony: testimony, however, of the very highest character: the testimony, namely, by which we receive the Bible as the *Word of God*;* the testimony by which we know that **THE FAITH** we now possess is that which has ever been held by the saints and martyrs of all ages since the Apostles; the testimony by which we administer infant baptism, keep the first day of the week holy instead of the Jewish Sabbath, and admit women to partake of the Lord's Supper—the testimony of the Holy Catholic Church of God; and, in a sense, subordinate thereto, the testimony of History—the same testimony by which we prove that there has been a succession of *Kings* in France or England, or of *Presidents* in the United States of America.

To the question, then, Did the *successors* of the Apostles appoint *others*, with a like Commission with that which *they* had received from the Apostles? I

* The Church receives the Old Testament as the Word of God, not because it was possessed by the Jews, but on the authority of Christ, who ratified the Canon of the Old Testament, which, under the division of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, comprehended the whole Hebrew Scriptures.—(Luke xxiv. 44.) And we receive the same Scriptures on the authority of the Church, and likewise the books of the New Testament. The fifth of the Methodist articles of religion is, in part, as follows: (Book of Discipline, page 10.)

“In the name of the Holy Scripture, we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in **THE CHURCH**.”

The above is taken from the sixth Article of the Church of England.

answer, unhesitatingly, Yes; and, that this Commission has been continued to the present day, in the order of men called Bishops, in *regular succession*.

Here, perhaps, you may ask, (as you have asked,) How is this? Have the successors of the Apostles given up their Commissions to the *second* order of the ministry—the Bishops, or Presbyters? I answer, No: the *second* order of ministers, though, *during the lifetime of some of the Apostles*, they bore the name of Bishop, never exercised those peculiar powers, which belonged to the first and highest order of the Christian ministry. I shall let two ancient Fathers of the Church, who wrote more than 1400 years ago, explain this matter:—

Hilary the Deacon, the author of a commentary, generally quoted under the name of St. Ambrose, thus writes: "They who are now called *Bishops*, were originally called Apostles. But the holy Apostles being dead, they who were ordained to govern the Churches could not arrive at the excellency of these first, nor had they the testimony of miracles, but were in many other respects, inferior to them.* Therefore they thought it not decent to assume to themselves the name of *Apostles*; but dividing the names, they left the Presbyters the name of the Presbytery, and they themselves were called Bishops." (Cited in Bingham's *Antiquities*, lib. ii, c. 2, sec. 1.)

There is also one of the earliest ecclesiastical historians, who says:—The same persons were anciently called promiscuously both Bishops and Presbyters, whilst those who are *now* called Bishops, were [anciently] called Apostles. But shortly after, the name *Apostles* was appropriated to such only as were *Apostles indeed*; and then the name *Bishop* was given to those who

* As in discerning of spirits, the gift of tongues, foretelling future events, freedom from error in doctrine, &c. &c.

fore were called Apostles," (Theod. Com. in 1 Tim.) such as Timothy, Barnabas, Junia, Andronicus, &c.

This explains the whole matter. And besides, there was a peculiar propriety in calling the *successors* of the Apostles *Bishops*, in order to distinguish them from the Apostles themselves. By referring to the first chapter of the Acts, you will find that Judas, an Apostle, had a "*Bishoprick*,"—that is, he was an Apostolic *Bishop*. This being vacant, in consequence of his death, *Matthias* was elected into his room, and "*took his bishoprick*,"—here, then, was another Apostolic *Bishop*. It does not appear, however, that the Apostles ever used their title of *Bishop*, but simply that of *Apostle*. The successors of the Apostles, then, when they relinquished the name Apostle to those who were the original Apostles, and took for *themselves* the name of *Bishop*, only took that which belonged to *their office*, but which the Apostles had not seen proper to use. Now, who would suppose, did we not see it with our eyes, that any body of men could be found, who would claim for members of the *second* order of the ministry the right to be such Apostolic Bishops, merely because the *name* of Bishop happened for a few years (about twenty years) to be occasionally given to the *second* order of the ministry!! Yet it is on *this* ground that the Methodist claim for Wesley, Coke, &c. the right to ordain! Because Presbyters are, for a *short* time (till the year 65) in the New Testament, occasionally called Bishops, they claim to be the *same order* with those Apostolic Bishops who succeeded the Apostles in their office and authority!! and thus to exalt the inferior order of *Presbyters* to the rank and power of the *first* order of ministers in the Church of God!

I shall now proceed to show, that these men ordained by the Apostles with Apostolic authority (but who, out of respect to the Apostles, drop the name of

Apostle and took the title of *Bishop*) appointed others, with a like Commission with that which had been given to *them*, and who thereby, in their turn, became the successors of the Apostles.

Clement of Rome, the companion of St. Paul, and a Martyr, thus writes in the year 87, "Our Apostles knew by our Lord Jesus Christ, that contentions would arise concerning the *office of Bishop*. And, therefore, having a perfect knowledge of this, they appointed persons, as we have before said, and then gave direction in what manner, when *they* should die, other approved men should succeed in their ministry."—This is an extract from Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians; which, Eusebius tells us, was "universally received by all," and had in reverence next to holy Scripture, being "*publicly read in most of the Churches, for common benefit, both in times past, and, also, in his memory.*" The fact, that this letter was thus received, revered, and read, proves that the doctrine of the Bishops being the *successors* of the Apostles, was the doctrine of the Church until the *fourth* century, when Eusebius wrote. And this fact is fully sustained by the evidence of other writers, who lived during that period. Thus, Irenæus, ordained by Polycarp, (who was the disciple of St. John,) Bishop of Lyons, A.D. 178, writes: "The doctrine of the Apostles is true knowledge; and the ancient state of the Church, and the character of the body of Christ, is according to the *succession* of Bishops, to whom, in every place, they delivered the Church." (Work against Heresies, book iv.)

Tertullian, A.D. 200, thus writes: "Let the heretics set forth the order of their Bishops, so descending by *succession* from the beginning, that he, who was the first Bishop, had one of the Apostles, or of the Apostolical men who was in full communion with the Apostles, for his author and predecessor. For, in this

manner, the Apostolical Churches bring down their registers; as the Church of Smyrna had *Polycarp* placed over them by John; as the Church of Rome had *Clement* ordained by Peter; as the other Churches also set forth those who were made Bishops over them by the Apostles." (Of Her. Pres. c. 32.)

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, A.D. 250: "This, brother, is and ought to be, our principal labour and study, to the utmost of our power, to take care that the unity may still obtain which was delivered by our Lord and by His Apostles to us, their *successors*."— (Epl. ad Corn.)

Again, Cyprian thus writes: "From thence, through the course of times and successions, the ordination of Bishops, and the frame of the Church, is transmitted, so that the Church is built upon the Bishops, and all her affairs are ordered by the chief rulers; and, therefore, seeing this is God's appointment, I must needs wonder at the audacious daring of some, who have chosen to write to me, as if in the name of a Church, whereas a Church is only constituted in the Bishop, clergy, and faithful Christians." (Ibid.)

Firmilian, A.D. 250, thus writes: "The power of remitting sins was given to the Apostles, and to the Churches which they founded, and to the Bishops, who succeeded to the Apostles, by a vicarious ordination." (Epl. ad Cyp.)

Clarus a Musculà, Bishop in the province of Carthage, A.D. 250: "The sentence of our Lord Jesus Christ is manifest, sending his Apostles, and to them alone committing the power given him by His Father; to whom we [Bishops] have succeeded, governing the Church of our Lord with the same power." (Orat. in Con. Carth.)

Thus we have the most positive testimony, from men living in various parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, that until the fourth century, the doctrine of the Apos-

tolical Succession was the universal doctrine of the Church; and that the Bishops of the Church were, by the whole Church throughout the world, received as, and accounted to be, the successors of the Apostles.

I have already quoted Eusebius, the historian, who every where asserts the same doctrine, and in the beginning of the fourth century, gives us a list (which I have also quoted) of the Bishops in Apostolical Succession, in the four principal Churches of Jerusalem, Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria. This brings us down to the great Council of Nice, in the year 325. This council was convened by the Emperor Constantine, for the purpose of considering the heresy of Arius. Who composed this council? Were *Presbyters* and *Deacons* summoned by the Emperor, to settle the Faith of the Church of God? No; it was to the *Bishops*, the successors of the Apostles, in their power and authority, to whom the imperial commission was issued, to declare what was the Faith of the Church, in the same manner as their holy predecessors in office had declared what was the Faith of the Church, and "delivered it to the saints" of their day. (Jude 3.) At this council, composed of several hundred Bishops from all parts of the world, who *presided*? A *Presbyter*? No; a *Bishop*; the venerable Hosius; in the same manner as St. James *presided* at the first council held at Jerusalem. This council declared what was *then* the Faith of the Church in a *Creed*, or form of Belief, which, known by the name of the *Nicene Creed*, has ever since, in all quarters of the globe, been THE FAITH of the Church of God.—Among the articles of the *Faith* therein enumerated is this: "*I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church.*"*

* The Nicene Creed only speaks of the *Catholic* and *Apostolic* Church. It was at the Council of Constantinople, held about fifty years afterwards, that this article in the Creed received its present form, of "the one, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." But the Creed is always called the *Nicene Creed*.

One: because the Church is the body of Christ, and Christ has but *one body*. (Eph. i. 22, 23, iv. 4.)—*Catholic*—because it is *universal*, embracing (or to embrace) “all nations” of the earth, and teaching the whole body of Christian truth; *Apostolic*—because it was founded by Christ acting by His Apostles, held the Faith as delivered by the Apostles, and possessed a ministry which had descended in *regular succession* from the Apostles. And such, indeed, *was* the Faith of the Church at that time, even had not this council assembled to declare it. The testimony of these Bishops show, what was the Faith held in the Churches where they *presided*; that it was the same delivered by the Apostles to the Church; and the testimony of Clement, Irenæus, Tertullian, Eusebius, &c., proves, conclusively, that the doctrine universally held concerning the founding of the Church, and its ministry, was, that it was founded by the Apostles, and that its ministry had come down in *regular succession* from the Apostles to that time; and that no others were accounted to be Churches except such as were thus founded; and no other ministry to be a valid ministry, except what could *prove* that it had thus descended.

Such, then, is the joint testimony of history and the Church to the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession until the year 325; and this particular doctrine of the Apostolic constitution of the Church, received likewise the seal and sanction of the council of Constantinople in the year 381, at which one hundred and fifty Bishops were present. Thus was set forth the *NICENE CREED*, embodying the Faith of the Christian Church. And this Creed has been the Faith of the Church, from that day to this. The whole history of the Church bears evidence to this *fact*. Day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, century after century, for 1500 years, has the Church, by her adoption and profession of *this Creed*,

borne Her testimony to the *fact*, that there is "one, Catholic, and Apostolic, Church;" and, in so doing, bears her testimony to her Belief, that her ministry is *Apostolical*—that is, that it has descended in *regular succession* from the Apostles. Travel where you will, in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, and you will find this *one* doctrine professed by the Church of God, embracing within its pale, more than *two hundred millions* of Christians; and you will find it denied by none (calling themselves "*a Church*") excepting those, who profess to derive their so called ministry, from the *second* order of the Christian priesthood, such as Wesley, Coke, &c. That a "ministry" with *such* an origin—from mere *Presbyters*—should *deny* the doctrine of the Apostolical Succession, is just what might be expected; because, if they were to confess that doctrine to be true, it would condemn them *out of their own mouth*.

Here, perhaps, you may say, that, although there is no doubt of the existence of Bishops in a regular succession, until the fourth century, yet it may be asked, What evidence is there that Bishops have existed ever since? And if they have existed ever since, what evidence is there, that the chain which binds them to the Apostles, has not been broken?

With respect to the *first* question, What evidence is there that Bishops have existed ever since the fourth century? I reply, *the double evidence of History and the Church*. Divide the last 1500 years into centuries; divide these centuries into years; these years into months; the months into days; the days into hours; and in every one of these centuries, years, months, days, and hours, HISTORY bears its evidence to the *fact*, that Bishops, (having under them Presbyters and Deacons) have existed in the Church of God.

The CHURCH also bears her testimony to this *fact*;
(1.) because she has always expressed her Belief in

the existence of the Apostolic Church; and this Apostolic Church could not exist, without an Apostolic ministry; and this Apostolic ministry must have become extinct, unless there had *always* been Bishops to ordain others in the room of those who died—for the power of ordaining—was not committed to Presbyters and Deacons: *their* powers terminate in themselves; they have no authority given them to transmit them to others. (2.) The Church bears her testimony to this fact, because she has always kept a record of the ordination of her Bishops. A record is one of the very highest kinds of evidence known to the Law. It is admitted, in all trials before a Court of Law in proof of *facts*, touching our lives, property, rights, or character. This record, kept by the Church of her official acts, is evidence before a jury, and is universally admitted as evidence in all Courts of Law and Equity. It is, then, evidence of the very highest character, to prove any fact whatever;† and is, therefore, the very best evidence to prove the fact of the existence of Bishops in the Christian Church, from the Apostles' days until now; and that these Bishops were received by the Church, each in his day, as having been *lawfully* elected, and *lawfully* ordained. The various Churches of Europe—of Russia, Poland, Portugal, Rome, France, Spain, England, &c.; of the East—of Constantinople, Alexandria, Syria, and Mesopotamia, all can show the *regular successions* of their Bishops, either immediately from the Apostles, or else through the Bishops of an Apostolic Church—as the Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, can show *their succession* through

† We have no higher evidence than *this*, to prove that the New Testament was written by inspired Apostles; our *Faith as Christians* rests on no higher evidence than that, by which we prove that the Bishops of each succeeding generation since the Apostles were *lawfully* ordained by other Bishops, who had themselves been *lawfully* ordained.

the Bishops of the Apostolic Church of England. In order to satisfy you of the truth and reality of these records, I have already given you *four* from Eusebius to the fourth century; and shall now give you the *succession* of the Bishops in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, through the Bishops of the Church of England, from St. John the Apostle. St. John ordained Polycarp Apostle or Bishop of the Church of Smyrna. He, in turn, ordained Irenæus Bishop of the Church of Lyons in *France*, (then called *Gaul*.) The *succession*, then, is as follows:

ST. JOHN.

1. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna.

BISHOPS OF LYONS.

1. Pothinus.
2. Irenæus.
3. Zacharias.
4. Elias.
5. Faustinus.
6. Verus.
7. Julius.
8. Ptolemy.
9. Vocius.
10. Maximus.
11. Tetradius.
12. Verissimus.
13. Justus.
14. Albinus.
15. Martin.
16. Antiochus.
17. Elpidius.
18. Sicarius.
19. Eucherius, 1.
20. Patiens.
21. Lupicinus.
22. Rusticus.
23. Stephanus.
24. Viventius.
25. Eucherius, 2.
26. Lupus.
27. Licentius.
28. Sacerdos.
29. Nicetus.

30. Priscus.

31. ÆTHERIUS. A. D. 589.

CANTERBURY.

32. A. D. 596. AUGUSTINE, missionary to the Anglo Saxons, was consecrated by VIRGILIUS, 24th Bishop of Arles, assisted by ÆTHERIUS, 31st Bishop of Lyons.

- | | |
|---|-------|
| | A. D. |
| 34. Lawrence, | 605 |
| 35. Mellitus, | 619 |
| 36. Justus, | 624 |
| 37. Honorius, | 634 |
| 38. Adeodatus, | 654 |
| 39. Theodore, | 668 |
| 40. Brithwald, | 693 |
| 41. Tatwine, | 731 |
| 42. Nothelm, | 735 |
| 43. Cuthbert, | 742 |
| 44. Bregwin, | 759 |
| 45. Lambert, | 763 |
| 46. Ethelred, 1, | 793 |
| 47. Wulfred, | 803 |
| 48. Theogild or Feogild consecrated June 5, and died Sept'r 3d. | 830 |
| 49. Ceolnoth, Sept. | 830 |
| 50. Ethelred, 2d, | 871 |
| 51. Phlegmund, | 891 |
| 52. Athelm, or Adelm, .. | 923 |

53. Wulfelm,	928	91. Thomas Arundel, 1396	
54. Odo Severus,	941	92. Henry Chichely, 1414	
55. Dunstan,	959	93. John Stafford,	1443
56. Æthelgar,	988	94. John Kemp,	1452
57. Siricus,	989	95. Thomas Bourcher, 1454	
58. Aluricus, or Alfri-		96. John Morton,	1486
cus,	996	97. Henry Dean,	1501
59. Elphege,	1005	98. William Wareham, 1503	
60. Living, or Leoning,		99. THOS. CRANMER, 1538	
or Elkskan,	1013	100. Reginald Pole, ...	1555
61. Agelmoth, or Æth-		101. Matthew Parker, 1559	
elnot,	1020	102. Edmund Grindall,	
62. Edsin, or Elsin,	1038	Dec.	1573
63. Robert Gemeti-		103. John Whitgift, ...	1583
censis	1050	104. Richard Bancroft, 1604	
64. Stigand,	1052	105. George Abbott, ...	1611
65. Lanfranc,	1070	106. William Laud, ...	1633
66. Anselm,	1093	107. William Juxon, ...	1660
67. Rodulph,	1114	108. Gilbert Sheldon, ...	1663
68. William Corbell, ...	1122	109. William Sancroft, 1677	
69. Theobald,	1138	110. John Tillotson, ...	1691
70. Thomas a Becket, 1162		111. Thomas Tennison, 1694	
71. Richard,	1174	112. William Wake, ...	1715
72. Baldwin Fordensis 1184		113. John Potter,	1737
73. Reginald Fitz-		114. Thomas Secker, ...	1738
Joceline,	1191	115. Thomas Herring, 1747	
74. Hubert Walten, ...	1193	116. Matthew Hutton, 1757	
75. Stephen Langton, 1207		117. Fred. Cornwallis, 1768	
76. Richard Wethers-		118. John Moore,	1783
field,	1229	AMERICAN BISHOPS.	
77. Edmund,	1234	119. From St. John, is	
78. Boniface,	1245	WILLIAM WHITE,	
79. Robert Kilwarby, 1272		of Pennsylvania,	
80. John Peckham ...	1278	consecrated Feb.	
81. Robert Winchel-		4, 1787, by John	
sea,	1294	Moore, Archbi-	
82. Walter Reynold, ...	1313	shop of <i>Canter-</i>	
83. Simon Mepham, ...	1328	<i>bury</i> , assisted by	
84. John Stratford, ...	1333	the Archbishop of	
85. Thomas Bradwar-		<i>York</i> , the Bishop	
dine,	1348	of <i>Bath and Wells</i> ,	
86. Simon Islip,	1349	and the Bishop of	
87. Simon Langham, ...	1366	<i>Peterborough</i> .	
88. Wm. Wittlesey, ...	1368	120. Alex. V. Griswold 1811	
89. Simon Sudbury, ...	1375	121. Wm. R. Whitting-	
90. William Courtney 1381		ham,	1840

Alongside of this noble list of Christian Bishops, headed by an Apostle, holding in his hand a Commission from Christ Himself, and composed of a friend and companion of the beloved Apostle, of martyrs and confessors—"men who have hazarded their *lives* for the Name of the Lord Jesus"—alongside of this noble list, I say, embracing the great and good of all ages of the Church, place the *Methodist Succession*!!

"Q. Who are the persons that exercise the Episcopal office in the Methodist Church in Europe and America?

"A. John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury, by regular order and *SUCCESSION*."

A fine succession of *Bishops* this from Wesley, a *Presbyter* of the Church! one of the *second* order of the Christian ministry! A *succession*, too, in which Wesley denies that *he* was a Bishop! In which he denies that *Asbury* was a Bishop! In which Coke, after *pretending* to be a Bishop, applies to Bishop Seabury to ordain him and Asbury *over again*!!

O shame! shame!! shame!!!

But, here, your other question comes in: admitting the fact to be *true*, that Bishops have always existed in the Christian Church, and that they have always claimed to be, and the Church has always received them as, the successors of the Apostles—what evidence is there, that the chain which binds them to the Apostles by *successive successions* has not been broken?

I reply, that this chain has *not* been broken, because *it is impossible that it could be broken*.

1. Because, if it have been broken, then there is no Christian ministry on earth.

The Christian ministry was established by Christ Himself, as I have fully shown; and no man has any authority to act as His minister, unless he be authorized so to do by Christ Himself (as were the Apostles

and St. Paul)—or, unless he receive his authority from those, whom Christ authorized to give it to him (which was the case of those, whom the *Apostles* ordained.) The Apostles, or St. Paul, would have had no authority to act as ministers of Christ, unless Christ had given them authority so to do. On the supposition, that there has been a *regular succession* of Bishops from the Apostles, holding the Apostolic Commission of *ordaining* and *sending* others to act as ministers of the Gospel—it is plain, that the ministry of the Church, at the present day, are as much "Ambassadors for Christ," as were the Apostles themselves, or those whom the Apostles ordained. But, if this chain of the *Apostolic Succession* of Bishops have been broken, then (whenever it happened) the ministry of the Church *ceased*—there was no power on earth clothed with authority to *ordain* others to act in Christ's name, until he issued a *new* Commission to another set of Apostles to send out ministers to act in His name, and by His authority. But Christ never has issued any such *new* Commission, and, therefore, the first Commission, given to the Apostles, must still be in existence, and preserved in an unbroken chain to this day..

2. This Apostolic chain could not be broken; because, if it could be, Christ's words would be *falsified*, which is impossible.

Christ declared, that "the gates of Hell should never prevail against His Church"—that is, it *never should be destroyed*. Now, the Christian ministry is an essential part of the Church. If there were no ministry in the Church, the Church would cease to exist, (because there would be none, after a few years, with authority to baptize: and thus, the old members dying off, and no new ones being added by baptism, the Church would become extinct)—that is, "the gates of Hell" *would* prevail against Her, and Christ's

words would be falsified! But this is impossible, because Christ's words are *true*: His declaration concerning the stability of His Church is *true*; the Church, therefore, is still in existence, and the chain of the Apostolic Succession has not been broken, *nor can be*, because the Church is to last *forever*—which it cannot do, if its ministry become extinct; and the ministry would become extinct, if, at any future time, this chain could be broken.

I have thus, sir, endeavored to set down, as briefly as possible, the various arguments you have heard me use concerning the necessity and reality of the Apostolical Succession, and other points connected with the Christian ministry. By giving them a careful perusal, I think you will be satisfied,

1. That there are three *distinct* orders in the Christian ministry, and that, therefore, Presbyters and Bishops are not the *same order*.

2. That the authority to ordain was committed to the *first* order in the Christian ministry; and, consequently, as neither Coke nor Wesley belonged to *that* order, they possessed no authority to ordain, and their ordinations would be invalid.

3. That there is an absolute necessity for a succession from the Apostles; and that such succession has always existed, and does now exist, in the Christian Church.

4. That no society has any foundation whatever for calling itself a Church of Christ, which does not possess a ministry thus Apostolically descended; and consequently, as the "Methodist Church" does not even pretend to have *such* a ministry, it is not a Church of Christ.

But, when one might suppose that the very last stone in the foundation of the "Methodist Church" had been removed, and that there was nothing left to support the crumbling fabric, all at once the Method-

lets shift their ground, and tell us that Coke and his successors (the present Methodist "Bishops") were only Bishops *in the sense of office*! Thus Watson, in his life of Wesley, (page 248,) in trying to show how it happened that Coke ceased to be a Bishop when he returned to England, says:

"Dr. Coke was only an occasional visitant in America, and though *in the sense of office* he was a Bishop there, when he returned home, as here he had no such office, so he used no such title, and made no such pretension!"

To call this a *silly* excuse, would be using too weak a word.—When an English, a French, or a Spanish Bishop, visits this country, though he has no such office here, nevertheless he is a Bishop still, and uses his title of Bishop, and is addressed by the title of Bishop. And if a Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church visits England, though he has no such office there, nevertheless he is a Bishop still, and uses his title of Bishop, and is addressed by the title of Bishop. When Mar Yohanan, the Nestorian Bishop, lately "visited" this country, he had no such office here; still he did not cease to be a Bishop, but claimed to be one, and was addressed as a Bishop. It would, indeed, be a most singular thing, that a Bishop should cease to be a Bishop because he happened to travel into another nation. At this rate, he would be under the necessity of being ordained over again at the end of every journey he makes, before he could again be a Bishop!*

I must confess, that this argument about "*Bishops in the sense of office*" is a most extraordinary one, and

* Coke, when he returned to England, applied, in 1813, to Mr. Wilberforce to get him *ordained a Bishop* in the Church of England; thereby acknowledging that he was no Bishop in any sense of the word. (Letters by the Rev. John Wesley, and the Rev. T. Coke, LL.D., page 20.)

am greatly astonished that the Methodists would venture to use it. Nothing that I have seen so completely exposes the nakedness of the whole Methodist system, as this pretence of *Bishops in the sense of office*! As I do not remember, in the various conversations we have had, ever alluding to this point, I shall briefly consider it.

1. By declaring Coke and his successors to be only *Bishops in the sense of office*, it is acknowledging that they are not *real* Bishops!

2. There is no such officer as "*a Bishop in the sense of office*" known to the Christian Church; and it is directly contradictory to the Scriptures, which only speak of the officers of the Church of God as being *really* and *truly* such.

3. Neither Wesley nor Coke, when they were ordained *Presbyters* of the Church, had any such "*office*" conferred upon them: neither could Wesley confer it on Coke, because all the powers which Wesley, as a *Presbyter* possessed, Coke possessed likewise, in an equal degree, as I have before shown. If either Wesley or Coke undertook to perform the duties pertaining to the "*office*" of a Bishop, it was an act of *usurpation*—authority to perform *Episcopal* duties was never committed to either of them by those who *alone* could give it, namely, the Bishops of the Church.

It is evident, then, that this talk about "*Bishops in the sense of office*," is a mere pretence. Neither Coke nor Wesley were such officers; and, if they had been, there is not, as I have said, any such officer in the Church of God.

But, independently of this, the argument destroys itself by proving *too much*: because, if there can be "*Bishops in the sense of office*," without being *real* Bishops, then there can be *Presbyters* "*in the sense of office*" without being *real* Presbyters! and *Deacons* "*in the sense of office*" without being *real* Deacons!

Whether this is not the situation of the "Methodist ministry" I leave you to judge. For there we find a body of men performing the various duties belonging to the office of Bishops, Elders, and Deacons, without being *real* Bishops, *real* Elders, or *real* Deacons; for no one, who is not *really* and *truly* a Bishop, can ordain *real* Elders and *real* Deacons; and thus we have a Society calling itself "a Church," with a visionary ministry—which is absurd.

But, in order to show more fully the absurdity of this argument, let us carry it a step further. If the officers of the Church may be such merely in the "sense of office," without being *real* officers, then the officers of the civil government may exercise the powers of *their* offices in the same manner, and we may have a President of the United States in the "sense of office" without being a *real* President; we may have Governors "in the sense of office" without being *real* Governors; and so we may have Judges, Sheriffs, Magistrates, &c., "in the sense of office" without being *really* Judges, Sheriffs, or Magistrates! and all these offices may be *usurped* by any one who is desirous of being a President, Governor, &c., "in the sense of office!"

Was there ever an argument like this before heard, or dreamed of, to prove a Society to be the Church of God, until the Methodists invented it? an argument which, carried out to its legitimate results, would make the Christian ministry a matter of moonshine, and reduce civil government to a state of anarchy!

And yet it is this argument, of there being "Bishops in the sense of office," without being *real* Bishops, by which it is attempted to uphold the "Methodist ministry!" And what is this but acknowledging, that, that "ministry" cannot be defended on the ground of Scripture, and consequently that it is *unscriptural*, and therefore invalid! What better proof can you

need, my friend, than this, that the "Methodist Church," instead of being built upon a "rock," (St. Matt. xvi. 18.) is built upon the sand! Oh! that Wesley's warning voice had been heeded, when he so pathetically intreated *Asbury*, for God's sake! for Christ's sake! for *his* sake! not to call himself a *Bishop*! Wesley clearly foresaw what would be the result of his doing so: he foresaw that a *spurious* Bishop (that is not "in the sense of office" only,) would introduce a *spurious* ministry, and *spurious* sacraments; and that in consequence, an awful schism would be made in the Church of God! Oh! that this warning voice had been heeded!

But, here, some might say, (as many have said,) "What care we for the Church, or its ministry, or sacraments? We have 'got religion;' our happy feelings tell us our sins are forgiven; we are perfectly satisfied." But, my friend, be not you like one of these! Remember our Lord's awful words:

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of *water* and of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God!"

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye *eat* the flesh of the Son of man, and *drink* His blood, ye have NO LIFE in you!"

And when are we "born of water and the Spirit" unless it be in the sacrament of Baptism? When do we, with the confession of the mouth, as well as the belief of the heart; (see Rom. x. 10.) eat His flesh and drink His blood," unless in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? Now recollect, that Christ gave His sacraments to His Church; that out of His Church there are no sacraments! that the *Apostles alone* received the commission to baptize, and to break the bread and to give the cup. Oh! that those, who talk about "their knowing that their sins are forgiven by their feelings," would remember their Saviour's awful words

which I have just quoted, and recollect that there is no *promise* of salvation made to any human being *out* of the Church of God; and that so long as they are without baptism by a lawful minister, they are not members of the Church! However they may think they have "got religion," and *feel* satisfied with themselves, let them know, that so long as they are not members of the Church of God, they have no assurance that they are bought with the blood of Christ! for it was "the Church, which God bought with his own blood." (Acts xx. 28.) And who can hope to be *saved*, unless he is bought with the blood of Christ? Awful! awful! indeed, is the situation of those, who have forsaken the church of their forefathers, to wander after teachers, who have no claim—no shadow of a claim—to call themselves ministers of the Church of God! I do not say, that no one out of the Church will be saved, for this I do not believe; but what I say is *this*—that God has no where *promised* to save us, unless we belong to that Church, which was bought with the blood of our Redeemer.* Are *you*, my friend, a member of that Church? Calmly and seriously, and with earnest prayer to God for His guidance and direction, examine this question; and if you find that you are not, then ask yourself, upon what do your hopes of salvation rest?

I have suffered my letter to grow to so great a length, that I shall only add, that I am very truly,

Your friend and servant,

* Why does every sect which springs up, if it be but a week old, call itself a *Church*? Because if any one should say, it was not a *Church*, it would be acknowledging that it had no part in the *promises* of God.



